

To: Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Lisa Belanger, North Yarmouth resident

Subject: LD 1378: An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act

Date: 06/11/25

My name is Lisa Belanger and I am a resident of North Yarmouth, Maine. I am writing in strong support of LD 1378. I believe Maine's Yellow Flag law was a step in the right direction....but a relatively small one and a step that is unduly complicated, cumbersome and confusing and therefore, fairly ineffective. Not convinced? Don't take my word for it, read the Commission Report from August 2024 which outlined these inadequacies. Maine's Yellow Flag law, does not allow the family to directly petition the court, but rather, forces them to contact law enforcement. For many reasons, this makes it unlikely to be used by families who do not want to further traumatize their loved ones by having them taken into custody. In addition, Maine law enforcement may very well not have the time or staff to respond to such requests for help. Further, medical evaluations in Maine, especially on an expedited basis, cause an unnecessary delay, a delay that may result in fatality. On the other hand, a traditional Red Flag/ERPO law is relatively straight-forward. The family files the petition and the judge, after reviewing the evidence, issues a court order. Done. This process can be completed in far less time, offering protection with the same due process safeguards and without the trauma and stigma of temporary police custody of the person of concern.

In closing, I believe it is time for us to truly put the lives of Maine people first. Red flag laws save lives. Thank-you.